Beverly of Graustark

GEORGE BARR M'CUTCHEON,

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never been ill. Are you quite recov-

"They say I am as good as new," he smilingly answered. "A trifle weak and uncertain in my lower extremities, but a few days of exercise in the mountains will overcome all that. Is all well give me no news here, by whose order I do not know."

"Turn about is fair play, sir. It is a well established fact that you will give them no news. Yes, all is well with me and mine. Were you beginning to think that I had deserted you? It has been two weeks, hasn't it?"

"Ah, your highness, I realize that you have had much more important things to do than to think of poor Baldos. I am exceedingly grateful for this sign of interest in my welfare. Your visit is the brightest experience of my life."

"Be seated!" she cried suddenly. "You are too ill to stand."

"Were I dying I should refuse to be seated while your highness stands." said he simply. His shoulders seemed to square themselves involuntarily, and his left hand twitched as though accustomed to the habit of touching a sword hilt. Beverly sat down instantly. With his usual easy grace he took a chair near by. They were alone in the antechamber.

"Even though you were on your last legs?" she murmured, and then wondered how she could have uttered anything so mane. Somehow she was beginning to fear that he was not the ordinary person she had judged him to "You are to be discharged from the hospital tomorrow," she added

"Tomorrow?" he cried, his eyes lighting with joy. "I may go then?"

"I have decided to take you to Edelweiss with me," she said, very much as if that were all there was to it. He stared at her for a full minute as though doubting his ears.

"No!" he said at last, his jaws settling, his eyes glistening. It was a terrible setback for Beverly's confidence. "Your highness forgets that I have your promise of absolute free-

"But you are to be free," she protested. "You have nothing to fear. It is not compulsory, you know. You don't have to go unless you really want to. But my heart is set on having you inin the castle guard." His bitter, mocking laugh surprised and wounded her, which he was quick to see, for his contrition was immediate.

"Pardon, your highness. rude, ungrateful wretch, and I deserve punishment instead of reward. The proposal was so astounding that I forgot myself completely," he said.

Whereupon, catching him in this contrite mood, she began a determined assault against his resolution. For an hour she devoted her whole heart and soul to the task of overcoming his prejudices, fears and objections, meeting his protestations firmly and logicvery enthusiasm was betraying her to him. The first signs of weakening inspired her afresh and at last she was riding over him roughshod, a happy victor. She made promises that Yetive herself could not have made; she offered inducements that never could be carried out, although in her zeal she did not know it to be so; she painted such pictures of ease, comfort and pleasure that he wondered why royalty did not exchange places with its servants. In the end, overcome by the spirit of adventure and a desire to be near her, he agreed to enter the service for six months, at the expiration of which time he was to be released from all obligations if he so desired.

"But my friends in the pass, your highness," he said in surrendering, "what is to become of them? They are waiting for me out there in the wilderness. I am not base enough to desert them."

"Can't you get word to them?" she asked eagerly. "Let them come into the city too. We will provide for the poor fellows, believe me."

"That, at least, is impossible, your highness," he said, shaking his head sadly. "You will have to slay them before you can bring them within the city gates. My only hope is that Franz may be here tonight. He has permission to enter, and I am expecting him

today or tomorrow." "You can send word to them that you are sound and safe, and you can tell them that Graustark soldiers shall he instructed to pay no attention to then whatever. They shall not be distion of the laughed outsight at her enthaliana. Many times during her enger convergence with Ballos she had almost beirayed the fact that she was not the princess. Some of her

gone, but you look as though you had expressions were distinctly unregal, and some of her slips were hopeless as she viewed them in retrospect.

"What am I? Only the humble goat hunter, hunted to death and eager for a short respite. Do with me as you like, your highness. You shall be my princess and sovereign for six months with you and Graustark? They will at least," he said, sighing. "Perhaps it is for the best."

"You are the strangest man I've ever seen," she remarked, puzzled beyond expression.

That night Franz appeared at the hospital and was left alone with Baldos for an hour or more. What passed between them no outsider knew, though there were tears in the eyes of both at the parting. But Franz did not start for the pass that night, as they had expected. Strange news had come to the ears of the faithful old follower, and he hung about Ganlook until morning came, eager to catch the ear of his leader before it was too late.

The coach was drawn up in front of the hospital at 8 o'clock, Beverly triumphant in command. Baldos came down the steps slowly, carefully, favoring the newly healed ligaments in his legs. She smiled cheerily at him. and he swung his rakish hat low. There was no sign of the black patch. Suddenly he started and peered intently into the little knot of people near the coach. A look of anxiety crossed his face. From the crowd advanced a grizzled old beggar, who boldly extended his hand. Baldos grasped the proffered hand and then stepped into the coach. No one saw the bit of white paper that passed from Franz's palm into the possession of Baldos. Then the coach was off for Edelweiss, the people of Ganlook en-Joying the unusual spectacle of a mysterious and apparently undistinguished stranger sitting in luxurious case beside a fair lady in the royal coach of Graustark.

CHAPTER XII.

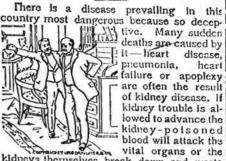
T was a drowsy day, and, besides, Baldos was not in a communicative frame of mind. Beverly put forth her best efforts during the forenoon, but after the basket luncheon had been disposed of in the shade at the roadside she was content to give up the struggle and surrender to the soothing importunities of the coach as it bowled along. She dozed peacefully, conscious to the last that he was a most ungracious creature and more worthy of resentment than of benefaction. Baldos was not intentionally disagreeable; he was morose and unhappy because he could not help it. Was he not leaving his friends to wander alone in the wilderness while he drifted weakly into the comforts and pleasures of an enviable service? His heart was not in full sympathy with the present turn of affairs, and he could not deny that a selfish motive was responsible for his action. He had the all too human eagerness to serve beauty; the blood and fire of youth were strong in this wayward nobleman of the hills.

Lying back in the seat, he pensively studied the face of the sleeping girl whose dark brown head was pillowed against the corner cushions of the coach. Her hat had been removed for the sake of comfort. The dark lashes fell like a soft curtain over her eyes. obscuring the merry gray that had overcome his apprehensions. Her breathing was deep and regular and peaceful. One little gloved hand rested carelessly in her lap, the other upon her breast near the delicate throat. The heart of Baldos was troubled. The picture he looked upon was entrancing, uplifting; he rose from the lowly state in which she had found him to the position of admirer in seeret to a princess, real or assumed. He found himself again wondering if she were really Yetive, and with that fear in his heart he was envying Grenfall Lorry, the lord and master of this exquisite creature, envying with all the helplessness of one whose hope is blast-

ed at birth. The note which had been surreptitiously passed to him in Ganlook lay crumpled and forgotten inside his coat pocket, where he had dropped it the moment it had come into his possession, supposing that the message contained information which had been forgotten by Franz and was by no means of a nature to demand immediate attention. Had he read it at once his suspicions would have been confirmed, and it is barely possible that he would have refused to enter the city.

Late in the afternoon the walls of Edelweiss were sighted. For the first time he looked upon the distant housetons of the principal city of Graustark.

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louds, on the summit of the mountain peak overlooking the city, stood the famed monastery of St. Valentine. Stretching up the gradual incline were the homes of citizens, accessible only by footpaths and donkey roads. Beverly was awake and impatient to reach the journey's end. He had proved a most disappointing companion, polite, but with a baffling indifference that irritated her considerably. There was a set expression of deflance in his strong, clean cut face, the look of a soldier advancing to meet a powerful foe.

"I do hope he'll not always act this way," she was complaining in her thoughts. "He was so charmingly impudent out in the hills, so deliciously human. Now he is like a clam, Yetive will think I am such a fool if he doesn't live up to the reputation I've given

"Here are the gates," he said, half to himself. "What is there in store for me beyond these walls?"

"Oh, I wish you wouldn't be so dismal?" she cried in despair. "It seems just like a funeral."

"A thousand apologies, your highness," he murmured, with a sudden lightness of speech and manner. "Henceforth I shall be a most amiable jester to please you."

Beverly and the faithful Aunt Fanny were driven to the castle, where the former bade farewell to her new knight until the following morning, when he was to appear before her for personal instructions. Colonel Quinnox escorted him to the barracks of the guard, where he was to share a room with young Haddan, a corporal in the service.

"The wild, untamed gentleman from the bills came without a word, I see,'

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

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Unprofitable Adam.

There is occasion for much beating about the bush for answers to many their match in the old Scotchwoman under examination for admission to church fellowship.

"What are the decrees of God?" she was solemnly asked. "Indeed, I trow, he kens that best

himsel"." "What kind of a man was Adam?" "On, just like ither fouk!" was the quick reply.

The questioner insisted on a more definite answer, "Weel," said she, "be was just like Jeems Madden, ye ken." "How so?"

"Weel, nacbody got anything by him, and mony lost."

"Waiter," called the customer in the

restaurant where a band was playing. 'Yes, sir."

"Kindly tell the lender of the orchestra to play something sad and low while I dine. I want to see if it won't have a softening influence on this tough steak."-Exchange.

At my own price as usual. This time Liberty Bell tobacco, factory price 38e, my price 29c by the box or 10c for 15c questions put by wise theologues to plugs. A little of that cheap crockery timid people, but one set of men found ware left. I want to tell you something about coffee and salt. I expect to get some of your trade if prices will do it. T. D. Harris,

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